

Information Paper for Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Rehousing Arrangements for Two-Person Elderly Households Affected by Redevelopment

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the Housing Authority's (HA's) rehousing arrangements for two-person elderly households who are affected by redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

2. On 3 April 2000, the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Housing passed a motion urging the Housing Department (HD) to stop allocating small flats of 16-17m² to two-person elderly households and to review the method of calculating the living space and the space allocation standards. The content of the motion was considered by the Rental Housing Committee (RHC) of the HA at its meeting on 18 May 2000. The RHC upheld the current allocation standards including the use of Internal Floor Area (IFA) in the calculation of space allocation. In line with the current allocation standard of 7m² IFA per person, small flats of 16-17m² in Harmony blocks are designed for small households of one to two persons. Two-person households with prospect of family growth may be allocated one-bedroom flats of 34m² subject to availability of resources.

3. HD has all along been adopting a flexible and sympathetic approach in allocating flats to one-person and two-person households, particularly elderly households. Casual vacancies of various designs in older estates with IFA between 15-31m² are therefore made available to them as far as possible within their choice of district. For tenants affected by the Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme, if the supply of small flats in the reception estates is insufficient to meet the demand, the allocation standard has been relaxed to allow offer of one-bedroom flats to two-person elderly households. Where a two-person household has circumstances which merit compassionate consideration, e.g. one of the household members requires more space for maneuver of wheelchairs or peritoneal dialysis or is in a hyperactive state, additional space will be allocated to meet the actual needs.

4. Moreover, families with potential growth are also allocated additional space in accordance with the prevailing policy. Under this arrangement, one-bedroom flats are allocated to two-person households with prospect of family growth to avoid the need for relocation due to overcrowding upon subsequent addition of family members.

5. In line with the White Paper on Long Term Housing Strategy published in 1998 which has been endorsed by the HA, the HD is obliged to consider cautiously any proposal to further relax the existing space allocation standards, particularly when there is still a substantial outstanding demand on the Waiting List.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT

6. At a LegCo Panel on Housing meeting held on 4 December 2000 to discuss the policy on rehousing upon redevelopment, Members again commented that the living space of the small Harmony flats was too small to accommodate two persons comfortably.

7. To facilitate a better understanding of the new design of small units and the actual conditions of two-person elderly households living in small Harmony flats, a joint visit to the HA Mock-up Centre and two elderly households living in small Harmony flats at Homantin and Tsz Lok Estates was arranged on 18 December 2000. Six LegCo Members, the RHC Chairman and one HA Member attended.

PRESENT SITUATION

8. In view of Members' concerns, we have looked into the position of two-person elderly households rehoused to public rental housing in the past two years and observed that -

- (a) apart from small Harmony flats, two-person elderly households are given an option to choose casual vacancies in older estates with IFA up to 31m² within their choice of district;

- (b) only 4% of the 3,298 two-person elderly households rehoused to public rental housing for the period from April 1999 to November 2000 have chosen small Harmony flats of 16-17m² whereas 96% of the concerned households have opted for other types of housing accommodation including refurbished flats of area up to 31m²; and
- (c) all the relevant factors in support of the RHC's decision made in May 2000 are still valid.

IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

9. To further meet the housing aspiration of two-person households, the layout of HA's small flats in Harmony blocks now under construction has been improved, thereby increasing the IFA by 10%. In the next five years, over 6,000 flats of 22-23m² suitable for allocation to two-person and three-person households will be completed to meet the demand. Details of the production of these flats are at **Annex A**. The designs of new small units and flats for two to three persons incorporating the enhanced features are at **Annex B**.

THE WAY FORWARD

10. As there are now over 109,000 applicants on the Waiting List for public rental housing, and public housing already takes up 16% of total Government expenditure per annum, we have to maintain the current allocation standard and rehousing arrangements for two-person elderly households to ensure rational allocation of limited housing resources to residents of all rehousing categories, including those on the Waiting List, clearance and redevelopment scheme. Nevertheless, we would continue to adopt a sympathetic and flexible approach to those rehousing cases that merit compassionate considerations.

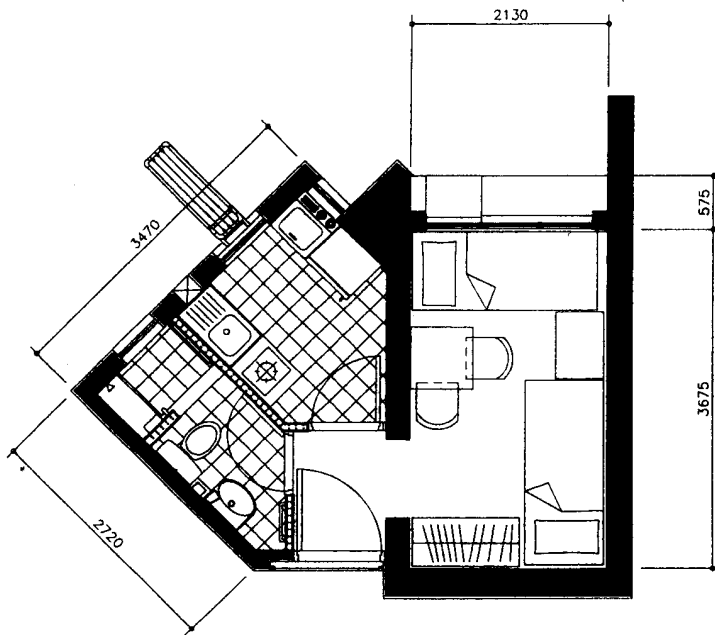
Housing Department
February 2001

Production of 1P/2P Flats by 2005/2006 (as at 2.2.2001)

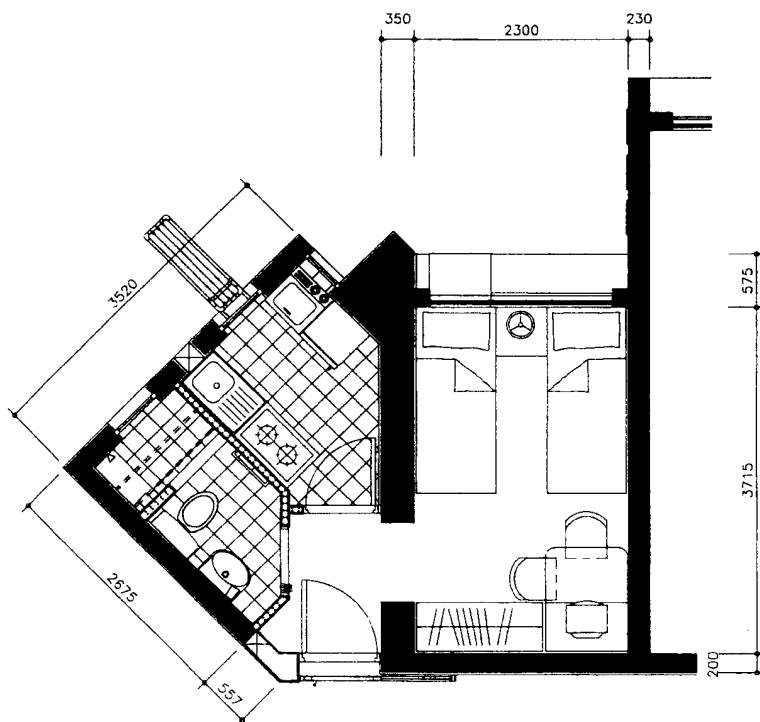
Flat Type – 1P/2P (about 17m ²)		No. of Flats Under Construction
Harmony	Harmony 1	2,941
	New Harmony 1	5,179
Harmony Annex	Harmony Annex 3, 4	1,171
	Harmony Annex 5	3,457
Small Households Developments		840
Total		13,588

Flat Type- 2P/3P (about 22m ²)		No. of Flats Under Construction
Harmony Annex	Harmony Annex 1, 2	622
	Harmony Annex 5	5,622
Small Households Developments		160
Total		6,404

Design Improvements To Harmony 1P/2P Flat



HARMONY 1
I.F.A. = 16.32m²



NEW HARMONY 1
I.F.A. = 17.81m²

The original Harmony 1P/2P is of 16.32m² I.F.A.

In the New Harmony 1P/2P to be completed in 2003, the following design improvements have been carried out:

- The I.F.A. is increased to 17.81m²
- The width of living area is increased from 2130mm to 2300mm to allow more flexible furniture layout.
- Size of cooking bench is increased to 800mm to accommodate a double-hob gas cooker.
- Sink and drainer position are reversed to provide easier access to the drainer and work surface.
- Timber bathroom door is replaced with plastic folding door.
- Lever type mixers for wash hand basin, shower and sink unit for easy operation.
- Sliding showerhead on a vertical rod to suit different required heights.
- Top of kerb in shower area is changed to granite finish.

Other Small Flat Designs

Besides the Harmony 1P/2P flat, there are other small flat designs. Since 1994, the following new designs aimed to cater for the needs of the elderly commenced ,

a) **Harmony Annex Block**

Domestic block of small flats annexes to Harmony Block to take the building services from it for economy and efficiency.

b) **Small Households Developments**

Small Households Developments are project specific design by assembling standard modular small flats to suit different site configurations and project requirements. They result in a variety of floor layouts and block designs.

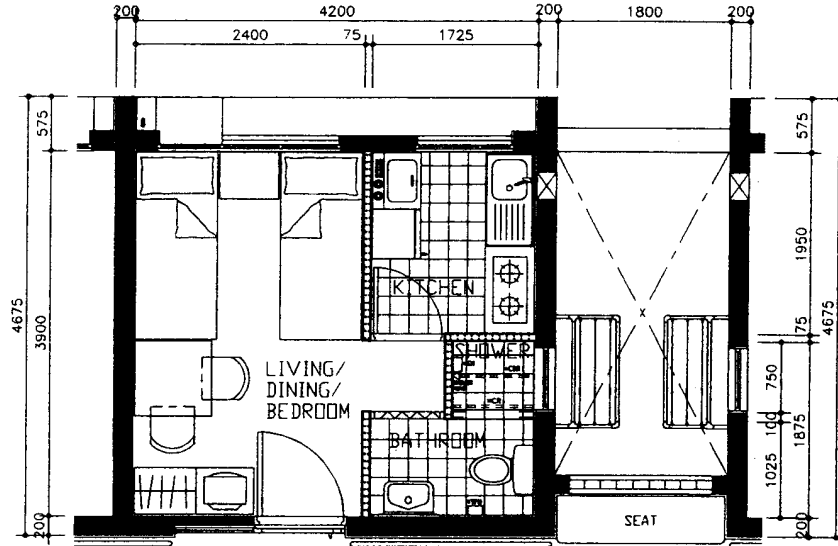
The improved provisions to cater for the elderly include:

- Lever type door handle for convenient use.
- Lever type mixers for wash hand basin, shower and sink unit for easy operation.
- Sliding shower head on a vertical rod to suit different required heights.
- Large rocker type switches at 1100mm from finished floor level for easy operation even for wheelchair users.
- Electrical socket outlets at 800mm from the floor level to avoid the need to bend too low.
- Designed to cater for easy conversion into wheelchair unit. Low thresholds, ramped access and space allowed for the installation of the grab rails and shower seats.

Other Small Flat Designs

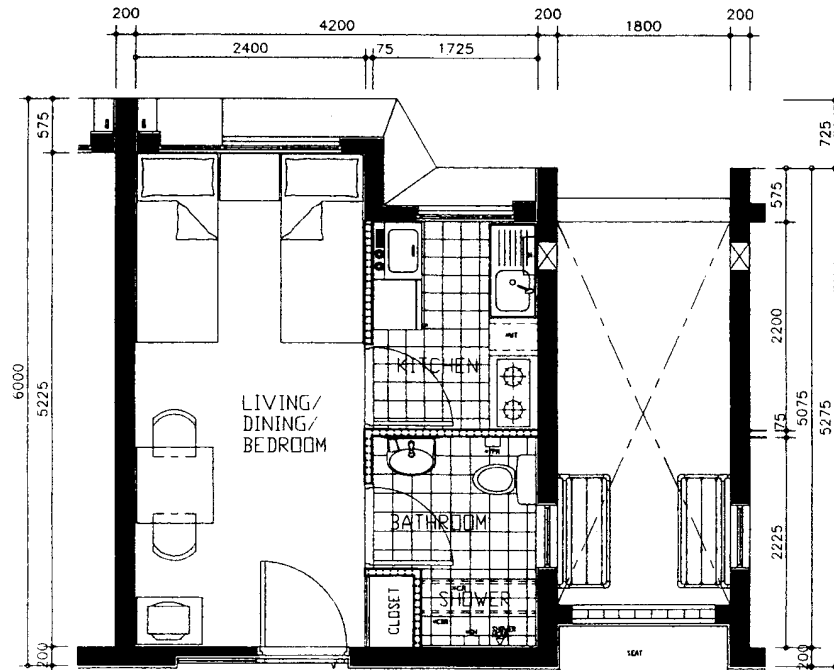
Harmony Annex Block

1P/2P Flat



HARMONY ANNEX 3, 4
I.F.A. = 16.38m²

2P/3P Flat

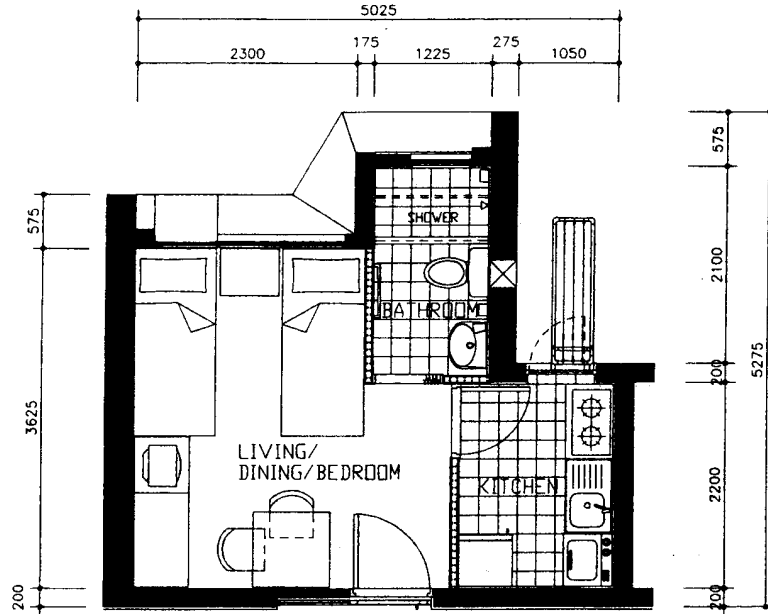


HARMONY ANNEX 1, 2
I.F.A. = 20.64m²

Other Small Flat Designs

Harmony Annex Block

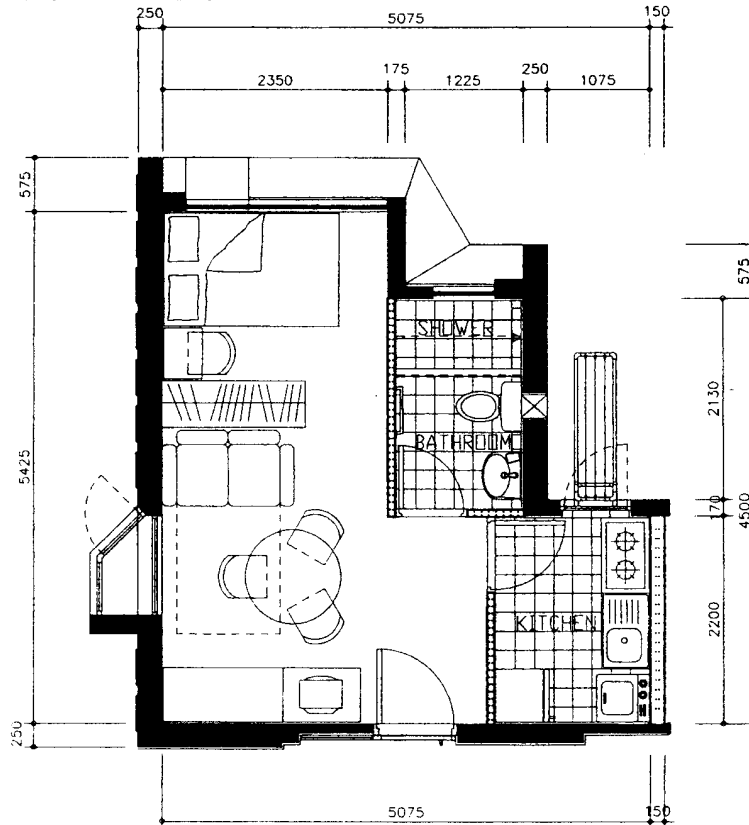
1P/2P Flat



HARMONY ANNEX 5

I.F.A. = 17.40m²

2P/3P Flat



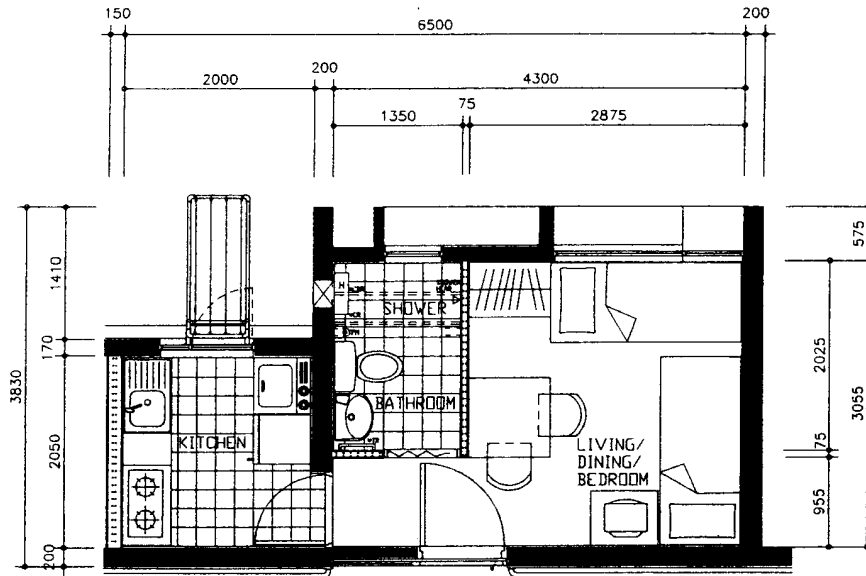
HARMONY ANNEX 5

I.F.A. = 21.69m²

Other Small Flat Designs

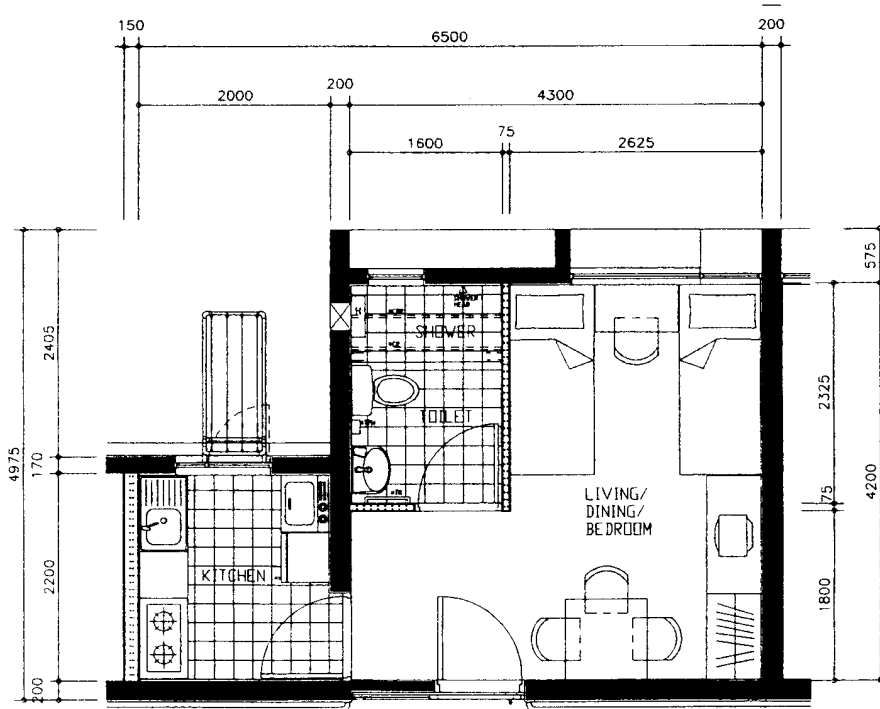
Small Households Developments

1P/2P Flat



SMALL HOUSEHOLDS DEVELOPMENTS
I.F.A. = 17.65m²

2P/3P Flat



SMALL HOUSEHOLDS DEVELOPMENTS
I.F.A. = 22.90m²